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THOUGHTS

ON

COMMERCE

AND

LIBERTY.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THIS TREATISE

ON

LIBERTY

AND

COMMERCE,

IS

ADDRESSED

TO THE

MERCHANTS,
MANUFACTURERS,

AND

TRADERS,

OF

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE MANUSCRIPT was ſent to the Editor by an unknown hand, after being ſubmitted to the peruſal of Mr. DRINKWATER, Chairman of the Committee of Manufacturers.

As the ſubjects treated of, are of the greateſt importance, it is hoped the ſame maſterly hand will not be long in favouring the public with a continuation.

COMMERCE AND LIBERTY.

PART THE FIRST.

LIBERTY SUPPORTED BY TRADE.

LIBERTY, NATURE's beautiful heireſs, in her primœval ſtate, diffuſed her bleſſings to the whole rational creation; but as ſociety advanced towards a ſtate of civilization, it became neceſſary to reſtrain the free uſe of her bounty by political inſtitutions: hence the origin of the ſocial compact, and the neceſſity of civil government.

COMMERCE, the fair ſiſter of Liberty, and common friend of mankind, taught the inhabitants of the varied climates, the benefits of mutual intercourſe, and the

advantages of mutual exchange of native productions. But her ſons made their approaches towards perfection by very ſlow degrees, until arts and manufactories began to flouriſh. The world then became one vaſt city, and every merchant and manufacturer a free denizon.

THE ancients were inſpired with a noble ſenſe of liberty, but they entertained very imperfect ideas of trade, and were utterly unacquainted with the influence of its principles upon the manners of ſociety. Hence we obſerve a rigorous prohibition of commercial intercourſe was one of the fundamental maxims of the famous republic of Athens.

THE policy of modern times hath imperceptibly drawn the zealous attachment of the nations of Europe to the other extreme; the whole bent of their genius being exerted in the improvement of the advantages of ſituation, native commodities and ingenuity, whilſt the ſpirit of liberty in the mean time is ſuffered to languiſh and decline.

WHOEVER forms ſuch narrow ſchemes of (miſtaken) policy, as tend to ſeparate the intereſt

intereſt of liberty and trade, will find himſelf wretchedly miſtaken, for the ſafety of both conſiſts in their union.

Thus when civil liberty and a well conducted commerce are firmly united, they form the ſureſt foundation of national happineſs, that can be produced by the wiſdom and prudence of rational beings. Let us therefore enquire into the nature of this junction, and endeavour to point out the aſſiſtance that each derives from the other.

'Tis a poſtulatum which cannot be controverted, that power muſt always follow property. Immenſe riches on the one hand and exceſſive indigence on the other, are ever the plaineſt indications of a deſpotic government and a ſlaviſh people. The fruits of induſtry are never ſecure where the ſovereign may exact whatever he pleaſes, and where a ſwarm of petty tyrants are more ſevere and oppreſſive than the monarch himſelf.

The ſubject muſt have his fire ſide, and (what in England is as ſacred as his houſehold goods) his liberty; he muſt be able to look power boldly in the face, and to lay

claim to ſomething that he may call his own, e'er he can be inſpired with a zeal for his country, or underſtand the benefits of a free conſtitution. In the ſtates of old wherein land was the only ſource of wealth, the agrarian law was ever the favourite object of the republican party, being conſidered as the firmeſt ſupport of civil freedom.

THIS was the leading feature of the famous Spartan code, inſtituted by the wiſe Lycurgus; but had that great law-giver known the natural benefits of trade, or rather had the ſtate over which he preſided, been in a condition to experience them, thoſe circumſtances alone would have been a perpetual agrarian law without any of its ſluggiſh inconveniencies.

THAT the ſhare which the ſubjects can command of the national ſtock, will hold a due proportion to their weight in the balance of power, is a fact which the hiſtory of our own country evidently demonſtrates. For, notwithſtanding the generous proviſion made for the people's liberty in Magna Charta, by which the barons were obligated to allow the ſame privileges to their *tenantry* which they

they had nobly obtained from the crown for themſelves,* yet for more than a century until commerce had diffuſed property, till manufactories became eſtabliſhed, and the rigid ſeverities of the feudal ſyſtem were ſoftened by the gradual and mild progreſs of trade, the barons were ſtill tyrants, and the bulk of the people ſervile.

THE ſtatutes merchant† and ſtaple‡ opened the firſt commercial ſource for alienation of lands; the well founded clamours of creditors were too loud to be reſiſted; hence partitions of eſtates were frequently made, which afforded the trading intereſt an opportunity of being inveſted with landed property.

IN like manner in the republic of Rome, although the right of electing magiſtrates, and in ſome degree the ſupreme power was

* Magna Charta, cap. 66. in Mat. Paris, fo. 255. Several writers of repute, particularly De Lolme, have hence derived the origin of Engliſh liberty; but they are dreadfully miſtaken, Magna Charta being (as Lord Somers, Sydney, Tyrrell, Locke, &c. juſtly declare) no more than a recognition of rights previouſly enjoyed by the Engliſh people.

† 13 Edw. I. A. D. 1258 } by which lands were firſt
‡ 27 Edw. III. A. D. 1353 } made liable to the creditors claims.

veſted

veſted in the people; yet their wretched indigence produced ſuch a dependence as obliged the brave citizens to ſubmit to an overbearing ariſtocracy, and to maintain for more than two centuries, an unequal ſtruggle with ſlavery, at the ſame time that they were nominally poſſeſſed of freedom.

The eſtabliſhment of the Valerian law * gave the plebeians a due weight; and the property which was diffuſed amongſt them by means of the military ſtipend, and the ſpoils of foreign conqueſts, (particularly the important city of Veii) gave them an opportunity to aſſert their independence. The ſeat of honour henceforth became open to the merit of every competitor.†

Thus the ſame cauſes produced the ſame effects in both commonwealths. When the Roman plebeians grew wealthy, they aſpired to the higheſt offices. When the Engliſh traders, manufacturers, and yeomanry, were poſſeſſed of property, their weight was felt

* Year of Rome 304 the laws made in the Comitia Tributa had the ſame force as thoſe made in the Comitia Centuria.

† 308. Licinus Calvus, the firſt plebeian advanced to conſular dignity.

in

in the ſtate, the ſyſtematic oppreſſion of the feudal œconomy gradually abated, and at length commerce, arts, and *manufactories*, triumphed over landed and regal tyranny. England at this period felt that her conſequence and ſtrength depended upon her extent of traffic.

A GENERAL diffuſion of wealth amongſt the ſubjects, is therefore the natural poize againſt arbitrary power in the government. But wealth is the peculiar gift of trade, which produces all kinds of affluence, by ſupplying the wants of one part of mankind with the redundancies of another; and what is moſt to the preſent purpoſe, its benefits are immediately conferred upon the ingenious and induſtrious part of every community.

THUS a new ſpecies of property is created, and a new ſpecies of monied intereſt raiſed up, which lifts the humble vaſſal within ſight of his haughty lord; and by diſperſing amongſt numbers of citizens, of various deſcriptions, the means of power, gives them a taſte for freedom and the ability to preſerve it: and as theſe ſentiments prevail throughout

out the whole community, the revolving conſtitution is continually attracted towards the center of liberty.

In the mean time the elevated ranks take no alarm, but pleaſed with the aſſiduities of the thrifty trader, indulged with thoſe conveniencies and elegancies which are continually introduced by the unwearied application and ingenuity of the *artizan*, and enriched in their turn through the increaſe of their rents, (which muſt ever enſue on the eſtabliſhment of manufactories, and the improvement of native commodities) they encourage and ſupport the friend of freedom, who in the end muſt prove fatal to their own power.

For liberty makes her advances no leſs after trade is become a general concern and the government and people are alike in its intereſt, than during the firſt ſteps of its progreſs. In the latter period the baſis of freedom is laid, by the removal of abſolute indigence; in the former that vaſt diſproportion of property is corrected, which prevented the bleſſing from being univerſally ſpread.

The

THE monarch too is deeply intereſted in the advancement of trade; for by means of ſubſidies and ſupplies, which in the firſt inſtant he will draw by ſmall portions, in the ſimpleſt and eaſieſt manner from each commodity;* he will be leſs ſenſible in a limited government of the controul of his nobles and grandees. This was the policy of the two Harry's the 7th and 8th, who continually ſupported the trading intereſt, as an equilibrium againſt the enormous weight of the clergy, greater nobility and baronage. To the ambition of the former of thoſe kings, England is indebted for that juſtly famous law † which accelerated the total abolition of feudal reſtraint and tyranny.

To the ungovernable paſſions of the latter, we owe the free exerciſe of the undefiled

* A ſmall toll at the place of ſale, and an impoſition at the time of importation, each of which was collected with little expence to the ſtate, and leſs perplexity to the ſubject. —The houſes of our foreſathers were then held ſacred, nor were an hoſt of exciſe officers authorized by law (ſuch law as it is) to pry into the ſecrets of the manufactories.

† 7 Hen. VII. cap. 2, 3. Thoſe who attended the king in his wars, "either beyond or on the ſea," might ſurrender their eſtates to the USES of their wills, and alienate without licence.

religion of chriſtianity, agreeable to men's conſciences and reaſon.* Theſe great revolutions in the ſtate, could not fail of being highly beneficial to the commonalty; and greatly aſſiſted the progreſs of trade. The glory of the Engliſh nation, and the pride of mankind, the virgin queen, compleated the work her anceſtors had begun, and the cheriſhing rays of commerce like a reſplendent ſun in the phyſical world, now ſhone forth in bright refulgence.—Thus we perceive that all the great ruling powers contributed to eſtabliſh that intereſt which ultimately tended to eclipſe their grandeur and diminiſh their influence, at the inſtant that it fed their vanity, and adminiſtered to their wants and paſſions.

For a continual addition of wealth, communicated alike through all the various ſtations of life, muſt haſten the ſeveral heaps

* The author preſumes not to condemn any man for his habits of thinking, or his modes of public worſhip; as he apprehends both are commonly the effect of example and education; and have in fact but little to do with *unaffected* piety, and *true* chriſtian principles. He only thanks heaven, that he lives in an *age* and *country*, wherein the chriſtian religion and ſound reaſon, are univerſally tolerated.

to

to a level, and bring the fortunes of fellow citizens, towards that limit of equality near which all the ſafe-guards of freedom lie.

It is here obvious how much better calculated for the intereſt of freedom is that commercial method of regulating the national property, by increaſing the ſhare of every induſtrious individual, than that agrarian diviſion projected by the ancients to ſerve the ſame purpoſe. Let it be admitted that both of theſe meaſures are equally effectual, yet the latter which does violence to the poſſeſſions of all the moſt powerful men in the ſtate, can never be brought about but by a military force, which is the leaſt eligible of all revolutions.* Whereas commerce works its effects by the moſt peaceful, popular and beneficial methods; and as we have already ſeen, will naturally obtain the patronage of the great and powerful. Let it be added that the agrarian law by removing all the rewards of induſtry and application, muſt produce

* The agrarian law in Rome eventually produced the civil war between Marius and Sylla. The ſame old quarrel was revived between Cæſar and Pompey, and Rome was enſlaved.—Vide Machiavel, cap. 37.

ſuch a general idleneſs and inactivity, as would inevitably beggar the public, expoſe its liberties to the dangers of a foreign conqueſt, and introduce a depravity of manners, and a diſregard for civil government, which would furniſh the faireſt occaſion to domeſtic uſurpation; whilſt commerce ſufficiently precludes the avenues of both. For by its vaſt augmentation of the national wealth, and by means of the number of laborious hands it employs, who are always ready to be turned to the public ſervice in time of need, it affords the ſureſt barrier againſt hoſtilities from abroad, and it is alſo vitally concerned to nouriſh and ſupport an habit of induſtry; a diſpoſition the moſt tenacious of its rights, and jealous of tyranny.

THIS effect of commerce, which we have been conſidering, will likewiſe furniſh a very ſtrong argument againſt a method which ſtill prevails in the conduct of trade, though its diſadvantages in other reſpects be notorious. We mean the abſurd and injurious practice of erecting companies of merchants, indulged with excluſive privileges.

SUCH

SUCH monopolies, by confining within a few hands the vaſt profits of an extenſive commerce, tend to counteract and deſtroy the benefits ariſing from the principles we have laid down. In an infant ſtate, ſuch inſtitutions for a limited time might have their uſes; but in a powerful kingdom, abounding with opulent and enterprizing ſubjects, they become dangerous engines of ſtate policy, directly pointed againſt liberty. Mercenary communities are naturally warped with the politics of the day, and it is not a queſtion whether they are of public utility, but whether they can be made ſubſervient to the views of the prevailing party. Happily in England there are few ſuch eſtabliſhments remaining, and we truſt the wiſdom of the preſent century will exterminate them for ever.

THEY are in the monied intereſt ſomething like thoſe gothic confederacies, by which an immenſe inheritance of land is confined to a ſucceſſion of ſingle heirs, whilſt a race of worthy relatives are left dependent upon the lord of the fee.

BUT

BUT a free and open trade, like a bold Kentiſh yeomanry, diſtributes her patrimony, enriches all her children, and gives none of them an opportunity to oppreſs and ruin their brethren.

FOR no ſooner are the profits ariſing from any branch of trade become exceſſive, than the vigilant ſpirit of emulation calls forth a number of competitors to ſhare the golden fleece. The conteſt for gain is as warm as for glory. Diligence, ſkill and hazard, the whole œconomy of trade are all exerted: and by cutting into many different channels the overflowing ſtream of wealth, the torrent ſoon ſubſides within its proper boundary.

FURTHERMORE an extenſive trade and flouriſhing manufactories, tend to ſoften the manners of men, to render them capable of ſocial impreſſions, to extend their views over the habitable globe, and to eradicate narrow prejudices. Theſe circumſtances conſiderably accelerate the progreſs of liberty.

HENCE that general improvement in the habits of life, that refinement in the public taſte and ſentiment; in ſhort all thoſe intellectual

tellectual and moral acquirements which dignify mankind.

THE contraſt between civilization in its beſt ſtate of perfection, and the rudeneſs of unenlightened ſociety, is too violent to give pleaſure by the deſcription. Nor is the compariſon leſs glaring between civil ſociety, uncultivated by commercial intercourſe, (if ſuch a ſtate can be admitted) oppoſed to the improved condition of a people amongſt whom trade and manufactories have flouriſhed.

THAT wide experience of men and things which trade and navigation affords, that enterprizing ſpirit which it cheriſhes, together with the encouragement which it hath given to genius and invention, have changed ignorance, barbarity, and inhoſpitable diſtruſt, into ſociality, confidence, arts and humanity, have given riſe to all that is uſeful and ornamental in human nature.

THIS ever was and will be the caſe; as a proof of it we need only to recur to the hiſtories of the Egyptians and Phœnicians, the moſt ancient trading nations that we know of it: Are they not honoured by poſterity

as

as the fountains of learning, ſcience, and civility?

Now after the views of mankind have been enlarged, when arts flouriſh and philoſophical enquiry is become familiar, it is natural to imagine that the theory and principles of government would be conſidered and its general tendency improved.

Thus the Grecians, the faithful diſciples of Egypt and Phœnicia in the liberal arts, (tho' not equally adepts in trade) no ſooner became famous for their accompliſhments than their monarchies began to totter, and they exhibited in their ſeveral ſtates more exhalted ideas of equal freedom than have ſince appeared in the world.

The gradual advance of trade and the improvements of manufactories, have thus been traced until we clearly perceive that they produce that greateſt of mental and ſocial acquirements, a true political knowledge and ſenſe of liberty.

They create and diſpenſe an eaſineſs of circumſtances, and in many inſtances an affluence of fortune to thoſe inconſiderable members

members of community to whom property was unknown.

HENCE by means of the great acceſſion of wealth to the indigent, which is in other words power to the weak, that extravagant ſuperiority is humbled, which ſupported the throne of deſpotiſm and riveted the chains of ſlavery.

AGAIN it illumines the mind with the light of philoſophy, knowledge and experience, and breaks through the dark veil of prejudice and ſuperſtition, which had made kings revered as gods.*

IN ſhort, both the internal and external effects of commerce conſpire to the ſame important end; the one moves the heart to wiſh, and teaches the head to deſign, what the other ſtrengthens the hand to execute.

HERE then we ſhall reſt the firſt part of this enquiry, preſuming that we have diſcovered the manner in which the intereſt created by trade and manufactories promotes liberty.

* G. A. Stevens, of facetious memory, has happily hit of this idea in one of his convivial ſongs.

"But when revolution had ſettled the crown
"*And natural reaſon knock'd tyranny down.*"

First. By the production of a new ſpecies of property, which emancipates the lower order of induſtrious and ingenious people from a ſlaviſh ſubjection to their ſuperiors: erects a new and independent rank of uſeful citizens, and enables them to look pride and power boldly in the face; and to aſſert the dignity of manhood.

Secondly. By giving riſe to that refinement in manners, that taſte for political and philoſophical inveſtigation, which never fails to make men acquainted with the nature of civil goverment and the excellence of national freedom.

Conclusion. The intimate relation between trade and liberty being demonſtrated, it becomes the bounden duty of every rank and order of Engliſh citizens to ſtrengthen the hands of both ſo as to render the tie indiſſoluble.

If the rude hand of exactive or inquiſitorial power, be ſuffered to touch the tender fibres of the manufactories, the national traffic will quickly feel the baleful effects: and ſhould commerce be driven from the much favoured iſlands, liberty will ſpeedily follow never to return.

LIBERTY

LIBERTY AND COMMERCE.

PART THE SECOND.

TRADE PRESERVED BY LIBERTY.

IN the firſt part of this diſcourſe, we have endeavoured to diſcover the ſacred ſprings from whence the ſtreams of liberty flow; aud we have followed their meandering courſe until they are diffuſed by means of commercial intercourſe, into a variety of branches and ſtreamlets, amongſt the needy and induſtrious part of mankind.

LET us now take another view of this delightful proſpect, and contemplate the circumſtances that render a free government peculiarly advantageous to trade.

THE firſt object that ſtrikes, is that ſecurity of property which the law of a free ſtate

affords its ſubjects. In an abſolute monarchy it is commonly unſafe to be rich. The exigencies of ſtate, or even the caprice of power, will too often furniſh an excuſe for the arbitrary ſovereign, or his more deſpotic miniſter, to embrace the readieſt means of raiſing ſupplies, by ſeizing wealth wherever it may be found. And whether this be demanded, together with the perſon of the owner, by a furious lettre de cachet, or aſked on the inſidious pretext of a loan, ſtill the hardſhip is equally apprehended and felt.—Whether the ſternneſs of a Turkiſh baſha, or the addreſs of a French comptroller of finances, be the guiſe of the executioner, the ſtroke is equally fatal.

SENSIBLE of the ill effects ſuch precedents muſt ever have upon trade, the wiſeſt monarchs have practiced all the arts of perſuaſion to quiet the fears and ſuſpicions of this lovely and uſeful ſtranger, and have courted her to become a ſettled inhabitant, by various grants and immunities. Their deluſions have ſometimes ſucceeded. But the watchful jealous look which ſhe is obſerved to wear in ſuch governments, ſhews

that

that ſhe conſiders herſelf all the while in an enemy's country, ready to withdraw upon any ſudden alarm. What numbers of merchants and manufacturers left their ſettlements in the Spaniſh Netherlands, on account of the arbitrary exactions and tyranny of Philip the Second, to take refuge under the mild and equal freedom of the Britiſh government? In like manner France was depopulated of its ingenious artiſts by the perſecution of Lewis the Fourteenth.

We may obſerve the citizens of Geneva at the preſent æra are treading in the ſame ſteps and flying from oppreſſion. Glorious is their flight, and generous are the arms that are opened to receive them!!!

Instances of this nature are ſeldom known in a ſtate where the perogative is reſtrained by law; where if the pooreſt ſubject feels the hand of violence, the whole power of the conſtitution is prepared to do him juſtice. The ſafe and quiet enjoyment of the fruits of his labour, being the principal end and reward that encourages the merchant to dare the hazards and expence of trade, it is rational to conclude that the country

country wherein this is beſt ſecured, muſt naturally be the ſeat of traffic.

And this is the true reaſon why the Britiſh iſlands have hitherto held that elevated rank amongſt the European nations; and they ever will, unleſs the people ſhould baſely, ignominiouſly, and traitorouſly, abandon their liberty.*

To this cauſe we may fairly aſcribe the firm reliance, (notwithſtanding the heavy funded debt) which foreigners of all ranks and nations, place in the good faith and credit of this kingdom; and whilſt England continues a free nation, their confidence is not miſplaced. It warms one's heart to a pitch of enthuſiaſm, to reflect that liberty is

* I cannot refrain from quoting my late friend G. A. Stevens, whoſe humourous productions abound with well directed point, and infinite merit; particularly his conſtitutional ſongs, in one of which is the following paſſage that would not have diſhonoured even Sydney.

"Oh preſerve it as free as 'twas given;
"We will whilſt we've breath,
"Nay, we'll graſp it in death;
"Then return it untainted to heav'n."

The Lacedæmonian ſongs (ſays Plutarch) had a ſpirit and fire in them that warmed men's minds into great and generous actions.

the

the faithful banker of the whole world; and that there is at leaſt one ſpot left, where human beings can think and act like men.

In the next place, that general diſtribution of property which is neceſſary to a free government, but utterly inconſiſtent with an arbitrary one, will be found a very conſiderable advantage to trade.

Whatever is the ſtate of arts and refinements in a nation, it is evident that there will be a greater circulation, and a larger conſumption of commercial articles, where the ſituations and fortunes of men are nearly upon a level, than if they were greatly diſproportinate: becauſe every man who is poſſeſſed of a decent competency will have ſome little taſte for what is convenient and refined; conſequently he is continually giving encouragement to art and ingenuity. Men of rank and diſtinction, whoſe more enlarged deſires require a more expenſive gratification, will at the ſame time contribute a very ample ſhare; nay they will be ſtimulated to exceed what otherwiſe would be the bounds of their expence, from the near approach which the merchants and traders will make towards

their

their elegancies and refinements: and thus at the ſame time that they are ſtriving to depreſs the growing conſequence and ſpirit of trade, and to exalt themſelves above it, they are inſenſibly furniſhing new reſources, which muſt eventually increaſe its grandeur and influence.

But where a few of the people are exceedingly rich and powerful, and the bulk of them extremely poor and depreſſed, the latter muſt confine their wants to the bare ſupplies of nature, and even that at the cheapeſt rate. Buying and ſelling enter but little into their concerns. They muſt prepare their own food, and make their own cloathing; and their miſerable dwellings are built, furniſhed, and inhabited by the ſame perſons.

If it ſhould be aſſerted that the enormous wealth which is poſſeſſed by the grandees, and ſcattered by them in refined luxury and voluptuouſneſs, will make up the defect; it is certainly a very great miſtake: for wherever this immenſe diſparity of condition ſubſiſts, the national wealth will always be leſs than in conſequence of a more uniform circulation.

When

When all the laborious part of a people are ſlaves or hirelings, it is folly to expect the ſame increaſe as if every little field was cultivated by its proper owner, who ſhould himſelf receive the fruits of his induſtry.* So that there are not the ſame materials for expence under an unlimited monarchy, neither are there the ſame motives and occaſions to call it forth; for greatneſs is always retired and unſociable. Men of exalted ſtations in deſpotic governments, ſeldom meet their equals, and therefore do not mixt ſo frequently in public aſſemblies, or join in that familiar intercourſe ſo common with the quality and gentry, merchants, manufacturers, and traders, under mild governments. So that the active principle of emulation, which is excited by compariſon, operates but weakly on thoſe who notwithſtanding the encomiums

* The Romans when they had conquered Vejum, ſent a colony thither and appointed to each citizen three acres, an half and a twelfth; wiſely judging, that it was not the quantity, but the proper cultivation of the land, that ſupplied the public wants. If the extenſive waſtes in this country had been cultivated on a ſimilar plan, the population and produce of England might have been doubly increaſed in the courſe of the laſt century.

of flatterers and dependants, are never liberal and profuſe compared to inferiors, in proportion to their relative riches. Now it is the great conſumption at home, which may be juſtly deemed the vital part of the arts and manufactories. The returns being quick, the artizan is ſtimulated to exert all his genius to captivate the eye by the beauty, and convince the judgment by the utility of his invention.

HENCE the merchant is induced to make adventures abroad, by which means the credit and profit of the nation is continually advancing.

BUT in arbitrary countries where this demand is frequently obſtructed by new and unexpected impoſts,* and where the rewards of genius and induſtry are rendered precarious, leſs attention is given to ſuch purſuits. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Fewer people will care to be initiated into ſuch miſteries, and conſequently thoſe emulous ſtruggles, and perpetual trials of ſkill,

* Exactly the ſame effects will be produced by new and unprecedented levies of exciſe, ſtamps, partial taxes upon the venders houſes, ſhops, &c. &c.

amongſt

amongſt artificers and manufacturers, do not prevail, which are neceſſary to bring their works to perfection, and which are ſo common in England.

We here plainly perceive that a great and beneficial extent of traffic cannot be raiſed and ſupported without the aſſiſtance of its great patron liberty. Again the ſimilarity of fortunes amongſt free citizens, ariſing from the property acquired by trade, enables them to maintain more extenſive manufactories, and to purſue uſeful diſcoveries and bring them to perfection. Enterprizing men will not be deterred from any hopeful experiments; and (what in this inſtance is very material) their large ſtocks, and extenſive ſale, will allow them to be content with ſmall profits.

On the other hand, in deſpotic monarchies the men of fortune are moſt of them men of family. Theſe are ever afraid of degrading themſelves by an application to commerce. Their high blood would be polluted by ſuch a condeſcenſion; whilſt their poor vaſſals, who have no ſuch pride or reſtraint, are in too abject a condition to be

capable of carrying on any work of difficulty and expence. So firmly is this falſe pride,* or rather wretched policy, rivetted in the very nature of a ſlaviſh people, that notwithſtanding the noble and unexampled efforts of Peter the Great, who ſubmitted to many years hard labour, and explored all Europe to enrich his ſubjects with the knowledge of trade and manufactories; yet the nobility of the immenſe empire of Ruſſia are ſtill content to rule over vaſſals rather than encourage freedom and the arts, and participate with their fellow ſubjects the ſweets of liberty.†

THUS the deſpot will too often find the manufactories of his depreſſed ſubjects but miſerable and imperfect attempts, compared

* Sir William Dugdale in his "ancient uſage of bearing "arms," ſays "a man that is but of mean parentage, and "riſeth by commendable means, is equivalent to him that "riſeth from a decayed family; and I could wiſh that every "man that riſeth a houſe by his good *induſtry*, ſhould be "honoured with ſuch mark or badge anſwerable to the "quality of his riſing."

† Such another Empreſs as Catherine might in a ſucceſſion of years wean them from their prejudices and ſoften their native auſterity. But it is too great a bleſſing for any nation to experience, when a Catherine and a Peter have been ſent as a boon from heaven in the courſe of one century.

with

with the productions of men who enjoy ſafety and freedom. Thoſe will therefore be purchaſed at any rate to the entire diſcouragement of trade and induſtry at home: and as this condition will extend to almoſt every thing that is exquiſite in the manual arts, and which relates to the gratification of refined and polite life, the ſtate is deprived of the ingenuity and labour that ſhould ſupply this demand, and muſt pay for its elegancies, yea even its coſtly conveniencies, in ready caſh, or unwrought materials, is directly againſt the balance of trade.

THIS ruinous ſyſtem is remarkably exemplified in Poland, which furniſhes an inſtance not to be paſſed over. The nobility of that ancient feudal kingdom, tho' entire maſters of the national property, are obſerved to live in leſs ſplendor than the more moderate courts of Europe. The bulk of the people are immerſed in poverty and ſervility.

THEY have ſcarcely any manufacture of their own, and corn which is their only ſtaple commodity, leaves no balance in favour of the ſtate, but barely counterpoizes the heavy account of foreign expenditure.

FURTHER-

FURTHERMORE it is a very ſtriking advantage that trade derives from free countries, that they are always more populous than abſolute monarchies. This fact is verified by the experience of all ages; the Swiſs cantons of modern times, and the Spartan commonwealth of old, although unaſſiſted by trade, are remarkable inſtances. But when we turn our attention towards the ſtates of Holland, we have at one view a proſpect of the immenſe increaſe of population, where commerce and perſonal ſecurity go hand in hand. Notwithſtanding the narrow limits of thoſe ſtates,* the inhoſpitality of the climate, and the natural ſterility of the ſoil, yet three millions of inhabitants are comfortably ſup-

* Not exceeding in extent the county of York.—† Population in the ſame proportion might increaſe the inhabitants of the Britiſh iſlands to thirty millions.

† Two very awful conſiderations ariſe from this thick population of the United States.—The firſt, the annual loſs of a million from the neglect of the fiſheries.—The ſecond, the great proportion of waſte lands in foreſts, chaſes, parks, &c. by the proper cultivation of which at leaſt three millions of inhabitants might be added to the population, inſtead of ſending our youth to ſcorch and periſh in foreign climates.

ported

ported in that land of thriftineſs.* Nature having beſtowed her favours with a niggard hand, the enterprizing ſpirit of commerce more than quadruples the deficiency.

THIS vaſt population is undoubtedly produced by the equality and certainty of the laws, and the vigour with which the conſtitution defends the property of the citizen, and enables him to tranſmit it to his poſterity. There is then no impediment to prevent the ſexes from entering into the hymeneal tie, and multiply their ſpecies. The fact being beyond diſpute, let us briefly conſider its effects, as they appear to advance the intereſt of commerce.

FIRST. It is evident that an increaſing population muſt increaſe the general conſumption of commodities, not merely in proportion to the augmentation of the people, but infinitely beyond it, from the influence

* And to the eternal diſgrace of Britain, the fiſheries are by our own neglect thrown into their hands, from whence thoſe ſtates derive an inexhauſtable ſource of wealth, whilſt (ſays the author of an excellent treatiſe intitled England's treaſure by foreign trade, Temp. Car 2.) "great multitudes "of our own people cheat, roar, rob, hang, beg, cant, "pine and periſh."

of

of faſhion, which ſubſiſts and flouriſhes by means of well frequented neighbourhoods; and by enlarging the ſphere of our wants, give encouragement to every kind of artificial production.

Secondly. It furniſhes a conſtant ſupply of hands to be employed in all the numerous vocations of traffic. It is to be underſtood that the original tradeſmen in every country having no property in land, and being from their numbers unable to ſubſiſt by agriculture, made themſelves uſeful by their ingenuity in applying the productions of nature to the various artificial contrivances employed in manufactures. Now if the number of inhabitants in the ſame diſtrict, be increaſed to any given rate, the number of this rank of men will be augmented in proportion, and as a very few additional hands will be ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſes of agriculture, the bulk of them muſt evidently fall into the diviſion of handicrafts. Neceſſity will oblige them to exert their faculties, and emulation will prompt them to excel.

Here then we trace the ſource and the perfection of manufactories. An immenſe

ſtock

ſtock of uſeful labour is laid up in the public ſtores, and an univerſal value is given to the works of artiſts, which renders their productions real treaſures to the ſtate.* Laſtly, it prevents an exceſſive advance in the price of labour, which is the unerring ſcale that regulates the profits of native productions, and ſecures them a certain vent in foreign markets.

For when the current coin is conſiderably increaſed, it too often happens under a relaxed police, that the various articles of life are upon the riſe, and this ultimately increaſes the price of labour. But if the money that circulates were doubled, trebled or quadrupled, if the produce of the ſoil, and the labour of the handicraft were equally increaſed, there would remain the ſame proportion, and the bad conſequences would be obviated.

Thus we have diſcovered three ſeveral branches on which the ingrafted intereſts of

* But a ſyſtem of burthening manufactures with taxes and impoſts, would deſtroy theſe beneficial conſequences; for it would be madneſs to lay up a ſtore, on which taxes muſt be immediately paid, on the proſpect of an uncertain vent.

trade grow up and flouriſh upon the ſtock of liberty.

FIRST, By the eſtabliſhment of equal and mild laws, under which the fruits of induſtry, and the acquirements ariſing from ingenuity and commerce, are rendered ſecure and permanent.

SECONDLY. By a ſimilarity of fortunes, and a diſtribution of property, the induſtrious and enterprizing part of the kingdom, are poſſeſſed of the means of forwarding trade, by continually improving the arts, and increaſing the manufactories.

THIRDLY. By an augmentation of population; for where the people are numerous, and the arts good, there the traffic muſt be great and the country rich and powerful.

CONCLUSION. After this enquiry into the mutual connection ſubſiſting between trade and liberty, we are no longer aſtoniſhed, when we behold deſpotiſm and poverty ſtalk with rigid and meagre countenances through many fertile provinces and kingdoms of Europe, and that ſmiling liberty, commerce and plenty, adorn the Britiſh iſlands.

We therefore moſt ſolemnly invoke every rank and condition of Britiſh citizens, by every moral and ſocial tie, to keep a ſteadfaſt and watchful eye over their freedom. To reſiſt the firſt incroachments, however artfully introduced or powerfully ſanction'd.

It is the pride and the duty of an Engliſhman to protect the fair goddeſs Liberty,* and to defend her from the rude aſſaults of tyrannic power, from whatever quarter it flows.

'Tis ſhe that ſmiles on the induſtrious villager, and ſweetens his frugal meal into a delicious repaſt,

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* Mr. Addiſon in a letter from Italy to Lord Hallifax, ſpeaking of arbitrary government, has the following excellent lines, which in point of ſentiment are congenial with our author's,

Oh liberty, thou goddeſs heav'nly bright,
Profuſe of bliſs, and pregnant with delight!
Eternal pleaſures in thy preſence reign,
And ſmiling plenty leads thy wanton train;
Eas'd of her load ſubjection grows more light,
And poverty looks chearful in thy ſight:
Thou mak'ſt the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'ſt beauty to the ſun, and pleaſure to the day.

'Tis

'Tis ſhe that inſpires the genius of the ſkilful artizan, and chears the manufacturer in the midſt of his ſevereſt toil.

She alone can ſmooth the face of the rugged hills, give beauty and fruitfulneſs to the vallies, and make the ſun ſhed a genial influence in every clime.

In ſhort 'tis Liberty that diffuſes every political and ſocial bleſſing which rational beings can expect or human nature can enjoy.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

FINIS.